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REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 1 and 5 are revised to place this application in condition for allowance. Currently, claims 1-3, 5-7, 15, and 17 are before the Examiner for consideration on their merits.

Applicants' attorney wishes to thank Examiner Carrillo for granting a personal interview on July 20, 2005.

This Supplemental Amendment is made as a result of the aforementioned interview. During the interview, Applicants argued that Mabuchi did not teach the control of acid solution to at least first and second tanks by the steps of calculating a total amount of acid solution, providing a predetermined distribution ratio to define an amount of acid to be supplied to the at least first and second tanks, and controlling the supply of acid solution to the at least first and second tanks by supplying a first amount to the first tank and a second amount to the second tank, the amounts based on the total amount of acid and the distribution ratio.

Mabuchi is clearly distinguishable from claims 1 and 5 in that the acid solution is supplied only to the last tank. While Mabuchi may know the concentration of the acid solution in the last two tanks, Mabuchi does not employ this knowledge in any concrete fashion. At most, Mabuchi adjusts the concentration of the solution going into the last tank, and this teaching does not form a basis to contend that Mabuchi teaches the claimed steps to support a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Further, there is no basis to conclude that Mabuchi obviates the invention. Mabuchi lacks any suggestion whatsoever to use the knowledge of the concentration of acid in the various tanks. To conclude that it would be obvious to control the concentration in two tanks based on a

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total amount of acid and distribution ratio would be the hindsight reconstruction of the prior art in light of Applicants' disclosure, and such a stance could not be sustained on appeal.

The arguments made in the previous amendment are believed to overcome the other concerns regarding the distribution ratio. However, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if a further interview would resolve any pending matters.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to examine this application in light of this amendment and the amendment after final and promptly pass all pending claims onto issuance.

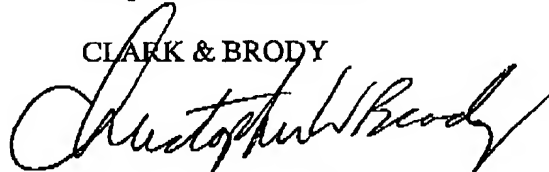
If the Examiner believes that another interview with Applicants' attorney would be helpful in expediting prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at 202-835-1753.

Again, reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Please charge any fee deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1088.

Respectfully submitted,

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